

Manuscript version: Author's Accepted Manuscript

The version presented in WRAP is the author's accepted manuscript and may differ from the published version or Version of Record.

Persistent WRAP URL:

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/152849>

How to cite:

Please refer to published version for the most recent bibliographic citation information.

Copyright and reuse:

The Warwick Research Archive Portal (WRAP) makes this work by researchers of the University of Warwick available open access under the following conditions.

Copyright © and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable the material made available in WRAP has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

Publisher's statement:

Please refer to the repository item page, publisher's statement section, for further information.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: wrap@warwick.ac.uk.

Training incumbents and *The Book of Common Prayer*

Greg Smith

Diocese of Hereford, England

Leslie J. Francis*

University of Warwick, England

Author note:

*Corresponding author:

Leslie J. Francis

Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR)

The University of Warwick

Coventry CV4 7AL United Kingdom

Email: leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk

Abstract

This study draws on a survey completed by 404 curates, who had been recently ordained priest, to explore the extent to which they had been exposed to *The Book of Common Prayer* by their training incumbent, and to identify the personal, psychological, and theological characteristics that predict individual differences in the extent of their exposure. The data demonstrated that well under half of the curates (44%) felt that their training incumbent had helped them use *The Book of Common Prayer*, and that only one third of the curates (34%) felt that their training incumbent had helped them to understand *The Book of Common Prayer*. The level of the curates' exposure was related to the age of the training incumbent. Younger training incumbents gave less attention to *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Keywords: curates, survey, training incumbents, *The Book of Common Prayer*

Introduction

The changing role of training incumbents

Training for ordained ministry within the Church of England has undergone considerable shifts during the past fifty years. Although the role of the training incumbent has remained a constant feature, this role has taken on a new significance and a revised set of expectations in the twenty-first century. In the 1970s there was a clear distinction between initial ministerial education rooted in a theological college and post-ordination training rooted in a parish-based curacy. At that time the emphasis during the college-based experience was placed on academic and theological education, while the emphasis during the curacy was placed on the practical aspects of ministry. On ordination to the diaconate, the curate was placed under the oversight of an experienced vicar or rector designated as training incumbent.

During the early years of the twenty-first century the changing role of the training incumbent and the increasing professionalisation of that role has been reflected in the reconceptualization of Initial Ministerial Education (IME) to embrace two distinct but connected phases. Phase one IME (years 1-3) remains within a theological college (generally for full-time training) or within a theological course (generally for part-time training) and embraces aspects of practical ministerial formation within church and other context-based placements. Phase two IME (years 4-7) is placed within the oversight of the Diocese and in the hands of a designated training incumbent.

Such changes in the role of training incumbents was heralded by the report, *Formation for ministry within a learning Church* (Archbishops' Council, 2003), colloquially known as The Hind Report. This significant document identified the need for an overhaul of attitudes to parish-based training. In turn, this report was succeeded by *Shaping the future* (Archbishops' Council, 2006), which attempted the important task of bringing further rigour and clarity to the selection of training incumbents. *The two reports* moved away from the use

of busy parishes that needed an extra pair of hands, and towards appointing reflective practitioners, who could demonstrate an aptitude for the role.

Researching the experience of curates

The importance of the training incumbent for shaping the experience of curates was highlighted in two key studies that used qualitative research methods. For the first of these studies, conducted before the implementation of the Hind report, Burgess (1998) chose the title *Into deep water*. He found that half of his sample of 20 curates believed that they had an unsatisfactory relationship with their training incumbent. From the interviews, Burgess identified what he described as five common ‘pathologies of training’ (p. 76): a lack of preparation before and feedback by the incumbent after a task; a lack of personal organisation and professionalism on the part of the incumbent; unwillingness to share tasks or recognise curates’ abilities; personal remoteness or hostility; and inappropriate attitude toward the curate. In the second of these studies, Tilley (2007) drew on the qualitative responses that 34 curates added to a survey designed to discover how curates perceived that training incumbents conformed to the new criteria proposed by the Church of England. From these data Tilley concluded that these new data provided only partial support for Burgess’ five pathologies. In response to the statement “I would recommend my training incumbent to other ordinands”, 54% endorsed it. In other words, the situation may have been improving, if only slightly

Building on these two qualitative studies, two subsequent quantitative studies have generated further insights into the way in which curates perceive the relationship with their training incumbent. For the first of these studies, conducted among 98 curates, Tilley, Francis, Robbins, and Jones (2011) explored curates’ perception of the expectations placed on them by their training incumbent through the lens of psychological type theory. Then they tested the extent to which these perceived expectations were related to the psychological type

profile of the curates themselves or to the psychological type profile of their training incumbent, using data provided by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). The data demonstrated that the ministry expectations placed on curates were significantly related to the psychological type profile of the training incumbent, but not to the psychological type profile of the curates. These findings suggest that training incumbents were more likely to be shaping curates in their own image, rather than developing the curate's own preferred disposition for ministry.

For the second of these studies, conducted among 416 pairs of curates and training incumbents, Smith and Francis (under review) explored the influence of personal, religious, and psychological characteristics of both the curate and the training incumbent in predicting curates' positive attitude toward the training incumbent. The data demonstrated that religious factors (Catholic or Evangelical, Liberal or Conservative, Charismatic or not Charismatic) were not significant. However, both personal and psychological factors of the curates themselves were significant. The curates who rated their training incumbent more highly were older and more emotionally stable. Personal factors were also significant for the training incumbents, as well as one psychological factor. The curates rated more highly the experience of working with younger training incumbents; and with training incumbents who expressed a preference for intuition over sensing. The most satisfactory experience of curacy was associated with older and emotionally stable curates working with younger training incumbents.

Research question

Against this background, it is hypothesised that training incumbents may have an impact on the exposure of their curates to *The Book of Common Prayer* and that there may be specific characteristics of training incumbents and of curates that predispose exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer*. In the light of previous research, the present study takes into

account three categories of potentially predisposing characteristics: personal characteristics, psychological characteristics, and religious characteristics.

The two core personal characteristics taken into consideration in the training relationship between curates and training incumbents by Smith and Francis (under review) were sex and age, both of the curate and of the training incumbent. Both sets of data are accessible through surveys completed by curates. In the light of studies that report greater attraction for older forms of services among older people (Francis, Robbins, & Astley, 2005), it is hypothesised that the older curates and older training incumbents may give greater exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The psychological characteristics taken into consideration by Tilley (2007) and by Smith and Francis (under review) are those proposed by psychological type theory and accessed by instruments like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005). These instruments distinguish between introversion and extraversion, between sensing and intuition, between thinking and feeling, and between judging and perceiving. The limitation of a study conducted only among curates is that psychological data will not be available for training incumbents. In the light of studies that report more conservative attitudes among sensing types than among intuitive types (Ross & Francis, 2020), it is hypothesised that curates who prefer sensing may be given greater exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The religious characteristics taken into consideration by Smith and Francis (under review) are those refined and measured by Randall (2005) and further developed by Village (2012, 2013). These measures distinguish between church orientation (Catholic and Evangelical), and theological orientation (Liberal and Conservative). In the light of studies that report the association between these three measures and religious beliefs and practices

(Village & Francis, 2009) it is hypothesised that curates who identify as conservative may be given greater exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Method

Procedure

On two successive years (2018, 2019) questionnaires were sent to all curates serving within the mainland dioceses of the Church of England shortly after they had been ordained to the priesthood. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and that no personal information would be stored. All told, 1392 surveys were mailed to curates and 404 responses were received, making a response rate of 29%.

Instrument

Personal factors of curates and training incumbents were assessed by two fixed choice questions. Sex was coded: male (1), female (2). Age was coded: under 30 (1), 30-39 (2), 40-49 (3), 50-59 (4), 60 and over (5).

Psychological factors of curates and training incumbents were assessed by the Francis Psychological Type and Emotional Temperament Scales (FPTETS). This 50-item instrument comprises the four sets of ten forced-choice items proposed by the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS: Francis, 2005; Francis, Laycock, & Brewster, 2017) related to each of the four components of psychological type theory: orientation (extraversion or introversion), perceiving process (sensing or intuition), judging process (thinking or feeling), and attitude toward the outer world (judging or perceiving). Additionally, the FPTETS contains a fifth set of ten forced-choice items designed to assess emotionality.

Religious factors of curates and training incumbents were assessed by the set of two seven-point semantic grids developed from Randall (2005) designed to assess church orientation (anchored by the poles of Catholic and Evangelical), and theological orientation (anchored by the poles of Liberal and Conservative).

Curates' evaluation of their exposure to The Book of Common Prayer was assessed by two items: My training incumbent has helped me to understand *The Book of Common Prayer*; My training incumbent has helped me to use *The Book of Common Prayer*. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale: disagree strongly (1), disagree (2), not certain (3), agree (4), and agree strongly (5).

Participants

Of the 404 curates who participated in the survey, 199 were male, 204 were female, and one preferred not to say; 30 were under the age of thirty, 99 were in their thirties, 89 in their forties, 125 in their fifties, and 61 were aged sixty or over; 363 identified as white British, 22 as white other, 10 as black, four as Asian, two as other, and three preferred not to say; 255 were ordained into stipendiary ministry, 114 into non-stipendiary ministry, 20 into ordained local ministry, 10 into pioneer ministry, two into ministry in secular employment, and three preferred not to say.

Analysis

Analysis was undertaken using the SPSS statistical package, employing the frequency, correlation, and reliability routines.

Results

- insert table 1 about here -

Table 1 presents the percentage endorsement for the two items assessing the curates' perceptions of their exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer* by their training incumbent. These data demonstrate that 44% of curates felt that their training incumbent had helped them to use *The Book of Common Prayer* and that the proportion dropped to 34% of curates who felt that their training incumbent had helped them to understand *The Book of Common Prayer*.

- insert table 2 about here -

Table 2 presents the correlations between these two items assessing the curates' perceptions of their exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer* by their training incumbent and the sets of personal characteristics, psychological characteristics, and religious characteristics. These data demonstrate that only one of the 12 predictor variables is statistically significant and that this variable is the age of the training incumbent, as calculated by their curates. Older training incumbents are more likely than younger training incumbents to give their curates exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Discussion and conclusion

The present paper set out to test a set of hypotheses concerning the personal, psychological, and religious characteristics that may predispose curates to exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer* by their training incumbent. These hypotheses were tested on data provided by 404 curates ordained as priests during 2017 and 2018.

Neither of the two personal characteristics of the curates considered by the study was statistically significant. The hypothesis that older curates would have sought more exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer* was not supported. Neither was there significant difference between the experience of male and female curates.

None of the four psychological characteristics of the curates considered by the study was statistically significant. The hypothesis that curates who preferred sensing over intuition would have sought more exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer* was not supported. Neither were there significant differences between introverts and extraverts, between feeling types and thinking types, or between judging types and perceiving types among the curates.

Neither of the two theological characteristics of the curates considered by the study was statistically significant. The hypothesis that curates who rated themselves as conservative would have sought more exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer* was not supported.

Neither was there significant difference between curates who rated themselves as Anglo-Catholic and curates who rated themselves as Evangelicals.

However, the personal characteristics of the training incumbents emerged as a significant predictor of their curate's exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer*. Curates working with older training incumbents reported more exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer*, both in terms of being helped to use *The Book of Common Prayer* and in terms of being helped to understand *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to uncover the extent to which curates ordained as priests in 2017 and 2018 had been exposed to *The Book of Common Prayer* by their training incumbent and to identify the personal, psychological, and religious characteristics that predict individual differences in the extent of their exposure. Two primary conclusions emerge from the findings of this investigation.

The first conclusion is that well under half of the curates (44%) felt that their training incumbent had helped them to use *The Book of Common Prayer*, and that only one third of the curates (34%) felt that their training incumbent had helped them to understand *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The second conclusion is that individual differences in the levels of curates' exposure to *The Book of Common Prayer* is not in their hands but in the hands of the training incumbent.

There are limitations within the present study that could be addressed by further research. In the present study, just two items were included to explore issues associated with *The Book of Common Prayer*. In future studies, the range of issues could be and should be expanded. In the present study, only the views of curates were canvassed and not those of training incumbents. This was because the Church of England invoked data protection as a

barrier to disclosing information about both curates and training incumbents. We created our mailing list from the names of those ordained as published in the *Church Times*. We had no means for identifying the names of training incumbents.

There are practical implications from this research for the Prayer Book Society. Alongside creating links with ordinands and with the providers of ministerial training through colleges and courses, it may be wise to try to create links with the real gate-keepers, that is training incumbents.

References

- Archbishops' Council, (2003) *Formation for ministry within a learning church*. London: Church House Publishing.
- Archbishops' Council (2006). *Shaping the future: New patterns of training for lay and ordained*. London: Church House Publishing.
- Burgess, N. (1998). *Into deep water: The experience of curates in the Church of England*. Rattlesden: Kevin Mayhew.
- Francis, L. J. (2005). *Faith and psychology: Personality, religion and the individual*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.
- Francis, L. J., Laycock, P., & Brewster, C. (2017). Exploring the factor structure of the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS) among a sample of Anglican clergy in England. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, 20, 930-941.
doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2017.1375469
- Francis, L. J., Robbins, M., & Astley, J. (2005). *Fragmented faith? Exposing the fault-lines in the Church of England*. Carlisle: Paternoster.
- Myers, I. B., & McCaulley, M. H. (1985). *Manual: A guide to the development and use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Randall, K. (2005). *Evangelicals etcetera: Conflict and conviction in the Church of England's parties*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Ross, C. F. J., & Francis, L. J. (2020). *Personality, religion, and leadership: The spiritual dimensions of psychological type theory*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Smith, G., & Francis, L. J. (under review). My training incumbent did a good job: An empirical investigation of personal, religious, and psychological factors shaping curates' evaluation of their training incumbent within the Anglican Church in England and Wales.

Tilley, D. R. (2007). Are curates trained properly? Following up Burgess's pathologies.

Journal of Adult Theological Education, 4, 149-164.

doi.org/10.1558/jate2007v4i2.149

Tilley, D., Francis, L. J., Robbins M., & Jones, S. H. (2011). Apprentice clergy? The relationship between expectations in ministry and the psychological type profile of training incumbents and curates in the Church of England. *Research in the Social*

Scientific Study of Religion, 22, 286-305. doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004207271.i-360.65

Village, A. (2012). English Anglicanism: Construct validity of a scale of Anglo-Catholic versus evangelical self-identification. In F.-V. Anthony & H.-G. Ziebertz (Eds.),

Religious identity and national heritage: Empirical-theological perspectives (pp. 93-122). Leiden: Brill.

Village, A. (2013). Traditions within the Church of England and psychological type: A study among the clergy. *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 26, 22-44.

doi.org/10.1163/15709256-12341252

Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2009). *The mind of the Anglican clergy: Assessing attitudes and beliefs in the Church of England*. Lampeter: Mellen.

Table 1

Perceptions of exposure to The Book of Common Prayer

	Yes %	? %	No ?
My training incumbent has helped me to understand <i>The Book of Common Prayer</i>	34	16	50
My training incumbent has helped me to use <i>The Book of Common Prayer</i>	44	13	44

Note: Yes = sum of agree strongly and agree responses

? = not certain responses

No = sum of disagree strongly and disagree responses

Table 2

Correlations with exposure to The Book of Common Prayer

	Item 1 <i>r</i>	Item 2 <i>r</i>
<i>Personal characteristics</i>		
Sex of curate	-.06	-.03
Age of curate	.06	.08
Sex of training incumbent	.03	.00
Age of training incumbent	.12*	.12*
<i>Psychological characteristics</i>		
Introversion preference	-.01	-.02
Sensing preference	.04	.02
Feeling preference	.01	.03
Judging preference	-.02	-.04
<i>Theological characteristics</i>		
Catholic – Evangelical	-.08	-.03
Liberal – Conservative	-.04	-.04

Note: item 1: My training incumbent has helped me to understand *The Book of*

Common Prayer

item 2: My training incumbent has helped to use *The Book of Common Prayer*

* $p < .05$